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Children's Perceptions of Their Use of Assistive Devices in Home and School Settings

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Purpose

The study aimed to explore how children with cerebral palsy (CP) perceived their disability and assistive devices and to consider the factors influencing their device use in home and school settings.

Method

Semi-structured interviews were adopted as the main data collection instrument. There were 44 participants, which comprised of 15 Taiwanese children with CP as well as their mothers and teachers.

Results

Most children associated their perceptions of disability with their experiences of lower physical performance. Consequently, they generally perceived assistive devices as having a positive effect on their disability. Their enthusiasm for using their devices in the home and school contexts, however, was markedly different. Four factors leading to such a difference were identified, namely the nature of the two environments, physical environmental factors, the children's desired level of independence and the mothers' attitudes.

Conclusions

The results demonstrate the significance of child-environment interaction. The children's attitudes towards device usage are influenced by their perceptions of the contextual feature of both settings. Additionally, the results indicate that children's views about their assistive devices may be different from those of adult users due to their different developmental stages and unique personal experiences. The findings suggest the importance of children's active participation in the field of assistive device research.

Keywords : Assistive Devices · Cerebral Palsy · Children's Views · Home · School